Vladimir Zworykin dies, developer of television

NEW YORK (AP) — Vladimir Kosma Zworykin, a pioneer in the development of television, has died at age 92, the RCA Corp. announced yesterday.

Zworykin died Thursday, a day before his 93rd birthday, in the Princeton Medical Center in Princeton, N.J.

The development of practical television stems to a large extent from Zworykin's work at RCA in the 1920s and 1930s, RCA said.

"His conception of the first practical TV camera tube, the iconoscope, and his development of the kinescope picture tube formed the basis for almost all important later advances in the field," RCA said.

The scientist was often asked if he ever envisioned television as a world-wide entertainment medium. He hadn't, he said, and was delighted with the first television pictures from the far side of the moon.

When he visited the Jet Propulsion Laboratories in California to see the reception of pictures of Mars, he said, "This is what television is really for."

Zworykin was elected an honorary vice president of RCA upon his retirement in 1954.

A Russian immigrant, he came to the United States after World War I and worked for Westinghouse in Pittsburgh from 1920 to 1929. In 1929 he teamed up with another Russian immigrant, David Sarnoff, later president and chairman of RCA, and won the management and financial backing that enabled Zworykin and scientists working with him to develop television into a practical system.

Zworykin was born in Mourom, Russia, where his father owned and operated a fleet of boats on the Oka River. His father sent him to the Petrograd Institute of Technology where he earned a degree in electrical engineering in 1912.

The scientist held more than 120 U.S. patents, ranging from gunnery controls to electronically controlled missiles and automobiles. The "Snooperscope" and "Sniperscope," World War II military developments, were applications of his infrared image tube research.

After his retirement, he worked for a time as director of a medical electronics center at the Rockefeller Institute in New York.

He is survived by his second wife, Katherine, of Princeton, and a daughter.